

# *Early Childhood Education and Care: Opportunities to Nurture Resilience*

*Thinker in Residence Series  
Commissioner for Children  
and Young People  
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## *Resilience is...*

- ✦ In the context of exposure to significant adversity
- ✦ resilience is the capacity of individuals to *navigate* their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well being, and...
- ✦ their capacity individually and in groups to *negotiate* for these resources to be provided...
- ✦ in culturally meaningful ways.



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**When a resource is unavailable,  
inaccessible, or potentially  
harmful, children will cope as  
best they can with what they  
have.**



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## *Avoiding Burnout?*

- ❖ A focus on resilience can mean less responsibility is placed on the worker to find the right solution
- ❖ Worker satisfaction:
  - ❖ Approach is explicit with regard to power, prejudice, and barriers to change
  - ❖ The personal is political (change occurs at multiple levels)
- ❖ Recognition of worker success



## *Vicarious Resilience (VR)*

- ✪ Pilar Hernandez-Wolfe describes VR as:
  - ✪ The positive impact in domains of one's life that result from traumatic exposure
  - ✪ Hernández, P., Gangsei, D., & Engstrom, D. (2007). Vicarious resilience: A new concept in work with those who survive trauma. *Family Process*, 46(2), 229–241.
- ✪ Our work can be a source of growth and VR



## *Assessing our VR (a selection of items)*

- ✦ Since you began working in your current career, how often have you experienced the following:
  - ❑ I am more hopeful about people's capacity to heal and recover from traumas.
  - ❑ I am inspired by people's capacity to persevere through awful circumstances.
  - ❑ I increasingly perceive people's strengths in the face of pain and uncertainty.



## *Continued ...*

- ✦ I am inspired when I consider the many obstacles (political persecution, racism, cultural barriers) that the people I work with had to overcome.
- ✦ I am encouraged to continue my efforts to make a difference.
- ✦ I appreciate better the opportunities I have in my life.



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## *Continued...*

- ✦ I am better able to see “problems” as opportunities for growth and change after witnessing people recover.



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*It is always better to offer  
substitute ways of coping  
rather than trying to suppress  
troubling behaviours*

**Thank you!**



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